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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SINGAPORE 000585

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CHANGED PARA 1 CLASS MARKINGS)

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2017
TAGS: [ETTC](#) [SNAR](#) [KTFN](#) [KCRM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [SN](#)
SUBJECT: DPM WONG RESPONDS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION
CONCERNS

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Classified By: Ambassador Patricia L. Herbold;
reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs WONG Kan Seng told the Ambassador on March 23 that he planned to discuss recent law enforcement cooperation developments during his upcoming visit to Washington. He acknowledged that much effort was required to conclude a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), and asserted that the GOS was providing us with requested financial information to the full extent allowed under Singapore law. He offered to look into our outstanding drug-related forfeiture requests. On counterterrorism, the GOS was working closely within its Muslim Malay community to nurture allies. DPM Wong expressed confidence that Singapore would comply with core anti-money laundering and terrorist finance requirements during the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) peer review later this year. He expressed concern that, while Singapore's new casino regulations incorporated many international best practices, the GOS had virtually no hands-on experience with the gaming sector. He expected Parliament to enact revisions to Singapore's Penal Code by the end of this year. End summary.

Upcoming Visit to the United States

12. (SBU) DPM Wong said he wanted to exchange information on recent law enforcement cooperation developments during his visit to Washington in the latter part of April. In particular, he hoped to discuss with Secretary Chertoff areas for cooperation under the pending Science and Technology Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). He said he also planned to meet with the New York City Police Department, noting that he had implemented several changes in the Singapore Police Force after his previous visit with the NYPD.

Developing Our Cooperation Further

13. (C) Ambassador Herbold expressed appreciation for Singapore's law enforcement and intelligence cooperation in several recent cases. She told DPM Wong that, while we enjoyed excellent cooperation in some areas, and greatly appreciated our close working relations with so many GOS agencies, our relationship stood to benefit from enhanced

cooperation in other areas (as discussed below).

MLAT

¶4. (SBU) DPM Wong acknowledged that certain differences divided the USG and GOS on concluding an MLAT. Both governments needed to work to resolve outstanding issues even though it would be difficult to do so. DPM Wong said that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) played a key role in determining Singapore's position on issues such as dual criminality, the scope of crimes covered under a positive list, and standards for limitations on assistance.

Financial Information Sharing

¶5. (C) DPM Wong asserted that GOS agencies were doing all they could in accordance with Singapore law to provide our law enforcement agencies requested financial information. He noted that all jurisdictions, including the United States, were subject to legal limitations of one kind or another. Beyond this type of cooperation, the GOS and the USG could also resort to intelligence channels to acquire information. He offered to have his staff investigate any pending investigation requests that were of concern.

Drug Forfeiture Requests

¶6. (C) DPM Wong claimed that resolving our outstanding drug-related forfeiture requests was a "minor issue," but that he would look into them; the Drug Designation Agreement (DDA) provided a clear processing mechanism. We must not lose sight of the "marvelous" relationship DEA and MHA's Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) enjoy in terms of combating transnational drug trafficking, he concluded, a sentiment with which the Ambassador strongly concurred.

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DHS S&T Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

¶7. (C) DPM Wong lauded the soon-to-be-concluded Science and Technology MOA with DHS -- likening it to another DDA but broader in scope -- as a prime example of deepening counterterrorism cooperation between our two countries. He expressed his hope that the MOA would be signed before next month's meeting with Secretary Chertoff in Washington. Ambassador Herbold raised the need to move forward with the non-binding agreement to exchange terrorist lookout information under Homeland Security Presidential Directive-6 (HSPD-6).

Intelligence Cooperation

¶8. (C) DPM Wong agreed with Ambassador Herbold about the importance of our joint counterterrorism efforts, both domestically and regionally. He explained that the GOS also paid close attention to the psychological aspects of terrorism by focusing on its most vulnerable communities. He cited the accomplishments of rehabilitation organizations within Singapore's Muslim Malay community that conducted educational outreach and counseled family members of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) detainees. Wong said the GOS needed community leaders who would speak out against terrorism; the government couldn't do that because officials were not experts on Islam or Christianity, he concluded.

FATF Mutual Evaluation

¶9. (SBU) DPM Wong expressed confidence that Singapore would comply with all FATF core requirements in time for its Mutual

Evaluation that commences in September. MHA was still considering how to implement requirements for cash couriers and was examining other jurisdictions' experiences closely. In particular, Wong was concerned about the effect a declaration system, which would require some kind of screening of each person entering Singapore, might have on border control efficiency.

Casinos

¶10. (C) DPM Wong explained that Singapore's new Casino Control Act made clear the need to develop a declaration system for casino-related cash couriers moving currency or related instruments in excess of S\$10,000 (US\$15,300). He noted that Singapore had conducted extensive research into casino regulatory regimes, dispatching investigative teams to Las Vegas, Macao, Australia and elsewhere, to ensure the Casino Control Act incorporated international best practices.

"We're good on paper -- and other regulators, including in the United States, have affirmed as much -- but we're inexperienced when it comes to hands-on management of a casino industry," he observed.

Penal Code Amendments and TIP Provisions

¶11. (SBU) DPM Wong assured Ambassador Herbold that the GOS remained focused on issues relating to trafficking-in-persons (TIP). He acknowledged that Singapore had experienced an increase in the number of vice-related crimes in conjunction with more liberal visa policies, but argued that few could be defined as TIP-specific crimes; police raids, for example, had resulted in the arrest of very few underage sex workers. DPM Wong explained that the sheer size of Singapore's Penal Code (over 500 sections) had required substantial resources in order to produce the proposed amendments, including ones that would address several TIP-related issues. MHA had developed a set of amendments that it planned to present to Parliament in the next several weeks, with passage expected before year-end.

Passport Misuse

¶12. (SBU) DPM Wong said that MHA was assessing how to strengthen its passport and border controls, which have included the use of biometric passports since August 2006.

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He stressed that travel was not a right but a privilege, and that the GOS was determined to punish any individuals who conspired to compromise the integrity and reputation of Singapore's passport.

HERBOLD